

EL HIJO DEL SANTO! Negro Casas! SUPER ASTRO! Lou Thesz! B.Bomb! Kwarnda (WHO?) and other stuff I saw and heard this week!

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #24! It was a big week as the Santo Rudo tape graced the mailbox(PETE WHIPS ASS!), I tried to catch up on the pile of NJ and AJ stuff that St Phil sent, and WP97 Tim and Dave stopped by to see the youngster and show me pictures of Minami Toyota and other stuff, and I eagerly await the Yakushiji-fest that the beloved Glenn sent.

-I watched the first of two giant Lucha tapes from lucha-maven extraordinaire, Pete, and GOD was it CHOICE! What the hell happened to EMLL? The last time I watched, it was a bunch of washed up has-beens getting in the way of the good Dos Caras moves. NOW: I counted six good young workers in the first three matches alone and they have the hottest feud of this decade possibly and it was all riveting. The pinnacle is the Hijo Del Santo heeltorn. Hulk Hogan would have had to have set the American flag on fire and defame Elvis's mother to get the response that Santo got when he turned, this was really, really intense and the matches were at a different level than any I've seen in Lucha. ECW should sit down and study this and see how effective bloodletting can be when you save it up for a REAL feud, because when it gets to the Dandy/Santo/Negro Casas triangle match, it's coming out by the bucket and the thing that keeps it from seeming excessive is because of the amount of hatred involved and how well it was conveyed. If Santo, an actual real living legend who NOBODY could contemplate being anything but a perfect face, hates Casas enough to turn heel just to beat the shit out of him, the level of barbarism is established from the get go. These matches work completely against the strong points of Hijo and Casas, which is fabulous technical wrestling. These are more like a truly hardcore Brodie/Abdullah type megabrawl, and they are all carried by the fact that everybody is totally in shock that it's Del Santo bustin people open and stomping them into the ground. Dandy/Santo section of the feud produces the most harrowing visual images you will see in wrestling as Dandy bleeds enough for both men- turning the famous silver mask blood red. This is weird. This is great. I want more.

-The rest of the tape was great for other reasons- mainly, everybody is working hard in EMLL. Hell! Satanico was a spry corpse for the match I saw him in with his ever-slower neato matwork. Silver King is looking great, post-losing his hair. Very stylish, and still one of the best topes in wrestling. Super Astro has- somehow- gotten even better. His highspots are even flashier and snappier and he hit one of the choicest fat Sentons to the floor and also hits a great top rope tope. Apollo Dantes actually did some highflying in the match I saw with him. Of course, he was in with Silver King and that brings out the best in him. Shocker got a truly beautiful new mask as everybody is jumping on the shiny metallic bandwagon (Super Astro was sporting his ass-stomping Togo-Killer Gold Michinoku Pro mask that he wore over in Japan in the second match on the tape I saw him, but I digress...)). Shocker is the most underrated worker of EMLL. He rules! I don't remember ever seeing him in a bad match. The punks of EMLL that may have a future is that guy with the Misterio mask (Sorry I haven't compiled the matchlist yet.)) and

Black Warrior. Black Warrior is kinda big and moves really well, though he seems kinda green. The MisterioMask:) was very impressive also with quicker movement and a small arsenal of second tier highspots and a hint of mat ability, from the one match I saw. And there were bunch of other young punks that are too soon to tell if they are going to amount to anything. Things are definitely looking up for the world's largest wrestling organization.

-I watched the Lou Thesz Biography (HESHAM is a kind and sharing god:)) which I guess was from the early 80's, which was pretty informative and all, with his explanations of hooking and shooting and their origins and the historical perspective on wrestlers from the formative years were kinda fascinating. He tried not to come off as a bitter old fruit like he always struck me as when I read interviews with him and he was pretty good about it except when he said Mexico never produced a good wrestler. Other interesting things he were that Dory Funk Jr was in need of more coaching at West Texas State, Buddy Rogers was not a real wrestler, Verne Gagne and Jack Brisco were great wrestlers and Harley Race was not a good wrestler. He was quite diplomatic with his opinion of Hulk Hogan, which was surprising.

-I watched a batch of the AJ tag tourney (PHIL!) including the Sabu/Allbright matches and they were pretty neat. The Sabu/Allbright vs Patriot/Kobashi match was the better of the two Sabu matches because it didn't have a TRULY ridiculous Sabu spot in it like the Hansen/Omori match had. I'm guessing they are setting up an Allbright/Kobashi feud to kill time until Kobashi gets the Triple crown back because they basically attempt to kill each other while Patriot and Sabu try to keep themselves occupied. This could be as choice as the Kawada/Allbright miniseries as AJ slowly figures out where Gary figures into the picture. So far, it seems his role is to prepare the big five for the equally hellish suplexes they will experience when wrestling Dr. Death Steve Williams. Sabu looked really okay in these matches and he worked really well with Omori, actually, so maybe they could explore that possibility as a future feud, if they are keeping our boy Terry over there for a while. Sabu and Allbright are actually a pretty good compliment to each other and would be really good if Sabu could convey an ounce of stiffness in any of his work. His flashy stuff would be a good counterpoint to single-minded matwork of Allbright. Allbright is becoming another favorite as he is not afraid to suplex the holy crap out of people and stay more stoic than any American ever has. I really look forward to a couple of Kobashi/Allbright matches and I figure they would have to have another at least to make up for the SURPRISE ending:.) I watched the Kawada/Taue vs Misawa/Akiyama and truly await: a.) the tag match where Somebody pins Misawa and b.) the next Triple Crown Title change where Kahoozits drops Misawa like a punk. Misawa going over Kawada is so INCREDIBLY old, and this match drove it home. I fell asleep as the Williams/Ace matches of the tape began so I'll yammer about those next time:.)

-WP97Tim and Dave came by the house to view the youngster, bedevil my hapless, innocent dogs and show me all the BITCHIN Japanese Wrestling Mags Tim just got(which said nothing about any angles, it was 100% workrate commentary. I could tell. What else would they talk about?:)) They had fabulous pictures of all the GAEA all stars and I watched as Tim and Dave recoiled in terror as I knew a little too much about Jd'. One of them mags also had a couple of pictures from B.Bomb, the Manami Toyota midnight choking pamphlet:), and HEY! CROWBOY!

WADDYA MEAN SHE'S CHUBBING OUT!?! She looks AWESOME, and I mean that in the most respectful, aesthetic sense.:)

-Nitro SUCKED this week. God, I was distraught. The only decent match involved Billy Pearl, and that's all I want to remember. Hey! WCW BRAIN SURGEON/ROCKET SCIENTISTS/GLUE-SNIFFING CRETINS ! MORE CRUISERS AND REAL REGAL MATCHES! Who gives a shit about that other crap? RAW had a match that involved a heart punch and didn't involve Ox Baker, so it was a wash too.

NANIWA~!